

## Reports and Questions—From Participants at a SAGE Sharing Workshop—held 9/23/99 in Wausau

1. **Wausaukee**—want to learn how to make program more effective. This year implemented a summer program that sent teachers into homes.
2. **Wausau**—first full year. VISTA home school liaison (planned to spend SAGE \$ for part time aide specifically to address the needs of the Hmong populations (were able instead to get a VISTA who was former literacy coordinator—with lots of existing community connections). Keeping focus narrow—effort on reading achievement - \$35,000 for literacy coordinator in building- furnished book room with leveled books, aligning K-3 objectives, site council took on community aspect of SAGE
3. **Waukesha**—White Rock—bilingual 70% - challenge with 27 per class—results 1<sup>st</sup> time 90% K came to first grade reading—SAGE allows intensive English instruction—half of kids have already (mid-September) done half year requirements.
4. **St. Point—Jefferson**—celebrations—after first year—did control group studies starting with grade 3—looking for SAGE improvements when kids get there—no minimal scores on TGRT—first time in 7 years (too many kids still not tested?). 100% K objectives met. Tips—save \$ for summer VISTAs –worked directly with Reading Recovery for ESL students—Problem - money/power—harder to make decisions—site based management training this year - 70% poor in K this year.
5. **Siren**—4<sup>th</sup> year in SAGE—K-12 in one bldg –original concept of SAGE (disadvantaged kids—one school—whole district) –All 4 components implemented—big difference in district—has tried to integrate “initiatives”- combine resources to narrow focus—high quality on few important things. Achievement going up—all in regular classroom proficient or advanced on TGRT. Do make a point to stay at 15:1. SAGE team now complete—3 sections per grade, K-1 at 14 per class, grades 2 and 3 have 11 or 12. Kids more engaged—school feels SAGE is fully implemented now. Expanding open school (library, early day open, gym programs, computer classes, guest authors to read to kids, getting other county agencies involved). End of January move to new building designed for SAGE!!!! Kids more self motivated—take responsibility—pride in building—all programs working together—consortium with Webster to use Title VI class size aid—could add a new special education teacher. Revamped whole special ed. dept. Professional development - just finished writing workshop from UW Superior, also got help from Superior schools—on leaning styles—refresher on CGI math (started summer workshop—teachers participated without pay). Expanding summer school 2 years ago, started with pre-K, (district did not have summer school before)—now expanded to all SAGE grades. Camp SAGE—free lunches and breakfasts (pays for itself) will be expanded to grade 4-6 next summer. Should be independent/self sufficient in 2 years. Revamped the whole playground—age appropriate equipment. Playground upgrade came from student fundraising (got 4x their goal) - district also contributed whatever else was needed. Student and teacher attendance has improved considerably. Site based teams started last year—teachers involved—like state standards and assessment process (now). In el. school making a “school of the arts” SAGE facilitates optimal performance for teachers and students. Get support from demonstrated results. Assessment component stimulates on going discussion—monitoring progress—ongoing—if goals are met—allow analysis if goals are not accomplished.
6. **Necedah**—from Charlotte Preiss (principal last year) - tremendous year—new school also had space for 15:1 classes—got early special ed. referrals from out of district, by time of evaluation 3 were no longer in need of identification/services. Lots of new staff development (all 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers went to state reading conference.) School got a VISTA—who cultivated and grew family and community outreach activities already in place—staffed the library after hours for the whole community. Objectives and evaluation—frustrating—teachers had put together good, high goals, but did not “meet” them because of one student (79 of 80 achieved).
7. **MPS**—DPI encouraged collaboration between SAGE and Class Size reduction for professional development. Topics to be provided this year include strategic flexible grouping, working with struggling readers, co-teaching, working with parents, running records, collaborating with colleagues. Schools are site based and do have some of their own professional development funds. Discussion took place regarding relationship of SAGE and P-5. Instruction improved, collegiality has grown, several VISTAs (3), likely to

borrow from Ladysmith's brochures (and everyone else's ideas)! Comparison schools not jealous but very supportive of findings. Parochial school in the city wants to use its own funds to replicate SAGE concept and class sizes. Staff person setting this up wants to visit and learn from SAGE schools.

8. **Ladysmith**—started mid-way last year. Doing a lot with school/family/community partnerships. Some were in place - now supplemented. New family oriented family conference center—centrally located—resource library for families. Active volunteer program, college students, parents/grandparents/ tutors. Strong local partnerships—Northwoods Family Resource Center holds parenting classes - collaboration to provide before and after school day care. New community library serves as a site for school-sponsored language (French and Spanish) classes for adults (there is a big waiting list). Lighted schools—computer loan out—to children who could benefit from extra instruction at home. Site council to do outdoor environmental classroom. Problems with computer loan out? No—have to teach parents how to turn on and off—dept. of social services provided a small grant to help create community partnerships. (Check out brochures for the various programs.)
9. **Eau Claire—Longfellow team**—looking forward to having more SAGE schools in district. (Good to be in Wis. where education is a priority.) Small classes and aides, enhancing curriculum—more field trips—real life experiences. Increased staff collaboration (give teachers time to talk to each other—share experiences—get advice)—time to create meaningful assessments to drive instruction—and that are useful to the next teacher—better to identify children's needs. Staff nervous at first about quantitative accountability—turned out to like it—more assessment turns out to be a good thing. Created a booklet—allows everyone to be involved in goal setting—and achievement (first grade team never had the opportunity before). SAGE aid provides release time for K teachers. Extra time for individualized assessments—baseline, Jan, Mar, May—using results to track progress—understand needs better—focus on where you are and where you are going. Good for new teachers—record what they think next years teachers need—used for parent conferences—sent some parts home (pictures) of progress. Goal to focus on achievement—via parent involvement—partnership coordinator (started with Title I). Lighted school highlights—family activities, parents and kids back to school—fall kindergarten connection—meet and visit teachers—also connect with other parents. Parent evening classes, family math. Hmong families—some focused meetings held just for them. Looking to increase parent participation. Extended day for kids—all walk to school. Challenge is enthusiastic staff—use university students, senior citizens. Site council in place—want to extend it—use SAGE aid for prof dev for all members—add more community members—survey school community this year? See what goals and needs are there.
10. **Bowler**—looking to learn. Combine resources after school, homework club, Lightspan, computer labs, breakfast, do professional development and mentor program, family activity nights—trying to expand. No before school programming possible?- 100% bussed in.
11. **Appleton Jefferson**—from 15% to 40% + poverty—Issues—different types of children in school (wide range of income and family circumstances). How to provide social experiences to the children who have not had much (visiting the store)? Some parents don't understand needs of poor families. Large Hmong, Hispanic population, 30% LEP, get extra ESL classes for K kids. SAGE helped focus on assessment—putting goals in writing makes people accountable—you own them. Makes everyone more student focused. Teaching styles differ—using same "alphabet" across grades made a difference. Site council, Village partnership. Looking to hire .5 new teacher where new children showed up. Hard to find staff this time of year. Got addition to school. Have shared classrooms (30:2). LEP and ESL kids with extra needs? Delayed language development is a problem for some students.
12. **Antigo K Center/North** - 2 of several classrooms at K are SAGE (15)—others are not (25)—have's and have-nots. Great improvements in social, as well as academic skills. North 2 years ago—30 kids, now another teacher- 30 to 2—can actually listen to kids thinking. Has family involvement nights—need to get parents in.
13. **Antigo Mattoon**—far from town—had 30:1 K—now 15:1, couldn't believe the difference—how fast kids got used to school—big reduction in discipline problems—now totally different atmosphere—improvements from half to full day K. This year's first graders from SAGE schools are much more skilled and need more challenge. Wonderful—but need to find lots more enrichment—appropriate to maturity level. More personal

assessment with each child—find problems faster. Last year CD child, now in regular first grade—made so much progress. First graders are kinder to each other—taught more social skills—work as a group. Early intervention program has made a big difference to help K kids come better prepared. Community/family back to school picnic. Most evident in fine motor skills.

14. **Adams-Friendship**—Mondays 4-7 p.m., families come to free spaghetti dinners—rooms, labs, gyms, computers open for use, parent classes. Require that child comes with the parent to most activities—very successful -150 to 200 each week—everyone loves it! After school program for students—will start Oct. 1 after school until 5, will provide late busses, for all schools - town and rural. Building volunteer program—501 letters sent out, got 78 responses offering help. Orientation last week, 28 came. Got AmeriCorp volunteer (get a VISTA if you can!)—which requires local match (OK from SAGE) 40 hours, half direct tutoring, half recruiting others. District person had staffed Monday nights, now AmeriCorp person can help. Will use SAGE to train EEN, TI, SAGE teachers, on ROFAH, for struggling first grade readers, works very well in SAGE setting.
15. **Laona**—360 Pre-K-12—very rural. 86% dist. property publicly-owned - not taxed. Integrate resources. Had senior staff. SAGE allowed new teachers at each grade. Fresh perspectives and ideas—to allow a team at each grade—to share ideas and learn from each other. New building—can have separate classrooms. Don't use 15:1 all day, (some classes are smaller)—to keep kids from getting too dependent on teachers—special classes get both sections of each grade. Teachers do consolidate lessons, combine units, switch classrooms sometimes. Title I redirected to upper grades (went from \$116,000 to \$37,000 in aid)—TI teachers go into classrooms to mentor during reading/math lessons—or break whole group in two with regular teacher. Try not to keep programs separate—combine resources to do good things—don't keep “labels” (turf) for separate programs. Do pay some attention to safety/security issues more than in the past—affects lighted schoolhouse activities. Do take the time to contact legislators to let them know what is going on in your school. Hard to do, but important.
16. **Bruce**—learning experience (for new principal) to come in after the contract (program plan and objectives) were already done. Last year 17:1 class grew to 26:1. (Had extra SAGE/Title I teacher to be able to split the class most of the day). SAGE allows the district to keep teachers that might have had to be let go due to declining enrollment. Smaller classes allow more attention to high, as well as low, achievers. Positive attitudes = less discipline problems. Common planning time for grades, time to meet, to plan, curriculum, teaching styles. Parent contact via back and forth notebooks—now teachers have time. More parent volunteers—parents come for breakfast and lunch. Try to combine resources from different programs. Open IMC 2x per month, reading/math nights, community picnics, planning pot lucks and parent classes. Subs love coming in. Classes go for town walks to experience stores, neighborhoods, environment—more teacher and parent interaction with small classes.

(These are the questions that came from the group - and the responses that were generated by those present.)

**Q. (Wauasukee) How to arrange specials?**

- Get more time from your district for special time.
- Reduce time between specials' classes in order for them to have (more but smaller) classes (Antigo).
- Have older kids miss on recess once per week in order to have their specials during that time.
- Three 15:1 groups broken into 2 groups for PE time.
- Use SAGE funds to hire extra special time, if funds are available and other requirements have been met.

**Q. (Waukesha) What DPI oversight is there regarding how high class size can be?**

**Q. (Necedah ) Problem—going over 15:1 because of unexpected enrollment?**

**Q. (Appleton Jefferson) - now up to 17 per class!**

- DPI only has access to third Friday count data - re. Enrollment by grade and number of teachers at each level. Schools self-report at the end of the year any instances where classes had more than 15 - expected to plan to avoid such situations next year.

- Class size can vary (STAR study describes classes varying from 13 to 17). Impossible to expect a school to hire a whole new teacher for one or two students.
- A district with more than one school is expected to consider assigning newly-enrolled families to non-SAGE schools if possible.
- If more than 15 children have to be enrolled in a particular class, have a plan with the teachers as to how "extra" children are to be accommodated. The school is expected to consider adding teachers if there are "extra" children in several sections.
- Combine SAGE, Title I, and other resources to fund additional staff if needed.
- Make use of the new federal Title VI Class Size Reduction aid to supplement SAGE and district funds to hire all the new teachers needed.
- Have Title I funded staff serve as team/co-teachers during reading/language arts or math lessons.
- May be able to get part time teacher—pay rate as long term sub.

**Q. (Adams-Friendship) getting to 15:1 with co-teacher only for reading, language arts and math. Minimum SAGE requirement?—leaves one teacher with big group the rest of the day?**

- Rethink how money is being used - minimum requirement may have been necessary at the beginning of the program but now that the district is phased in K-3 sufficient \$ may be there to change the structure.
- Consider mixed grades/multiage grouping (check out the multiage web site maintained by CESA 4 (<http://www.cesa4.k12.wi.us/programs-services/multiage/multi.htm>). Such arrangement may allow more flexibility.

**Q. (St. Point) Problem—jealousy- from other schools? School gets "too much" press?**

- Use (good) results from SAGE school as rationale for district to implement small classes in all schools.
- Use achievement data to inform legislators in the hope they will eventually expand the SAGE concept to all schools and districts.

**Q. (Siren)– how will funding for the concept continue?**

**Q. (Adams-Friendship) continued funding after 5-year contract ends?**

- Everyone has to get involved to lobby—because legislature can end program at any time.
- Got to go to SAGE lobby day—great experience!
- Crash course to legislators—powerful information from parent and substitute teachers (much better environment for subs).
- Siren has made a point to lobby in Madison - governor's aides know the district and return their phone calls.
- Keep in contact with legislators. Send newsletters to them, invite them in.
- Send info directly to the governor—get his education aides involved.
- Start organizing next year—early to get the sunset lifted
- DPI is aware—looking to make the program permanent in some way.

**Q. (Appleton) What if the SAGE program becomes permanent but with a different (higher) poverty threshold than a current school has at the time?**

- DPI would probably recommend either that all current SAGE schools get continued funding regardless of any newly-created poverty threshold, or have the opportunity to phase out over several years if SAGE changes and becomes permanent at a different poverty rate.

**Q. (St. Point) How to determine if you met the objective (did charts to show growth of pupils)? Can we do a better job of reporting out the data—more powerful- more inclusive- reporting on types of problems children have?**

**Q. (Necedah) Change the reporting form? To more accurately reflect progress.**

- Q. (Antigo North) kids not EEN-identified at beginning of year but probably will be—thus did not meet SAGE goals. How to evaluate EEN pupils in SAGE scoring/reporting?**
- Schools may define their objectives however they like. Consider how the school collects and maintains evidence that children have met the objective.
  - (St. Pt. Jefferson) Use Excel as a report method allows you to show percent of growth—Use computer technology to store and analyze data locally.
  - Some current SAGE schools did not think about how EEN pupils should be accounted for within the objectives set—if SAGE is expanded again DPI should make new schools aware - encourage them to think about how definition of objectives and proficiency goals may be affected by inclusion.
  - Include handicapped pupils in objectives if possible and appropriate. Consider the various ways pupils can demonstrate proficiency, don't evaluate achievement by only one method. Provide that the objective will be considered achieved if a pupil can demonstrate by three out of four (for example) of the defined assessment methods.
  - Include special ed. teachers in setting objectives.
  - Schools should send ideas of how to make the reporting forms better or how to restructure the reporting process to DPI.
  - Keep expectations high - use "explanation" portion of performance objective reporting form to explain the circumstances if an objective was not achieved.
- Q. (Eau Claire) Competition with other schools for community resources?**
- Pool resources with other schools, hire one person to do community outreach/collaboration to work for the good of every school.
  - Apply for a VISTA or AmeriCorp volunteer who can work on community collaboration.
- Q. (Eau Claire) How to get parents with bad school experiences to be comfortable coming to school?**
- Do fun things that are community enhancing—school should not always be asking parents for something. (Give first, to get later).
  - Host community festivals. (Keshena School is used for one or two community dinners every year.)
  - Look at VISTA/Babies Need Books projects - school/library/community sponsors book and goodie bags that go to parents of newborns encouraging them to read and come to the school for more information. (Antigo and Stevens Point have particularly well-developed programs).
  - Implement home visits (Wausaukee's recent summer program, Green Bay Jefferson teachers make such visits in the fall to complete the Title I parent compacts).
  - Take the school to the community. (Kickapoo SAGE teachers made a float and participated in the local community festival and parade. LaCrosse Hamilton VISTA workers provided coordination for teachers and classes to walk through the neighborhoods, stopping at the homes of students, delivering "goodies" and inviting families to come to school events. - see enclosed clipping.)
- Q. (Eau Claire) Have's and have-nots—two schools in the building—jealousy from teachers/parents of pupils not in SAGE grades.**
- If SAGE works pupils getting out of third grade will be good, confident readers who love learning and school, who know how to work together, are "kinder" to each other. These traits should eventually make easier work for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, even if they have groups bigger than 15.
  - Don't let negatives rule. Make the SAGE rooms look good.
  - Show what the extra resources have provided. Use good results with SAGE as rationale to school board to reduce class sizes at all grades (Lac du Flambeau has already done this).
- Q. (Eau Claire) Building space crunch—how to find more space?**
- Q. (Appleton Jefferson) No space.**
- Rent space in other buildings.

- Use portable classrooms (Keshena, Bayfield).
- Consider locating pre-school programs, K4, or K5 grades with close-by Head Start, or day care providers.
- Move higher grades out - to nearby buildings if space is available there (Blaine/Superior).
- Tear down the walls.
- Put computers in classrooms and convert labs.
- Make “Title” rooms into classrooms.
- Have teachers and classes move into rooms the size to meet the needs (put small groups in small rooms, larger groups (26:2 or 30:3) in the bigger rooms).
- Do team teaching and/or share space.
- Put up dividers (shelving or soft walls)?
- Or provide people with training to work together—send teachers on road trips to see how room sharing and team teaching can work if people want it to.
- If team teaching, make sure the “new” person is not treated like an aide. Problems—when one teacher is leading and other is supporting—feeling that support teacher is not really “teaching” during the whole day (and thus not earning "teacher" pay?)
- New teachers can develop a better teaching style faster by having to share (issues of tone of voice, style) - they can learn a lot from more experienced persons.
- Use improved achievement and improved school environment as documentation of the value of smaller classes - use it in community information sessions when the district goes to referendum to add more classrooms (Siren).

**Q. (Appleton Jefferson) At what point does an LEP child need assessment for EEN?**

- (Get info. from Hawthorne Hills in Wausau). Had federal grant, provided training for school psychologist—studying what is normal language development, how to evaluate in ways valid to child. Intensive training for bilingual aide on language development—works with kids in native language. Be careful regarding such referrals.